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Contact: Will Bohlen Elizabeth Boswell Rega  
Tel: +1 202 294 4704 +32 (0)473 280 950  
Email: [wbohlen@gmfus.org](mailto:wbohlen@gmfus.org) [eboswellrega@gmfus.org](mailto:eboswellrega@gmfus.org)

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## NATO SecGen: Leaders should refocus NATO goals at summit

~ *De Hoop Scheffer says alliance is at crossroads, risks becoming scattered, ineffective* ~

BRUSSELS (March 22, 2009) — NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said today that 60 years after its conception NATO must be reexamined to ensure its ability to guard against a growing number of threats, including energy shortages and climate change.

“Clearly, the time has come to take a hard look at NATO’s future evolution,” de Hoop Scheffer told a Brussels Forum audience. Later, he added, “This notion of a transatlantic bargain remains eminently sound. However, in a far more complex security environment, that bargain needs to be extended to cover a wider range of concerns and interests — from territorial defense, through regional stability, all the way to cyber defence, energy security, and the consequences of climate change.”

Canadian Minister of Defence Peter MacKay, Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski, and U.S. Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D-CA) participated on a panel alongside de Hoop Scheffer to discuss NATO’s future and, more immediately, what must happen at the upcoming summit in France and Germany.

The NATO discussion kicked off the final day of the fourth-annual Brussels Forum, a high-level meeting of influential worldwide leaders to discuss pressing transatlantic issues. Brussels Forum is organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) with the Federal Authorities of Belgium & the Egmont Institute, Daimler, and the government of the Czech Republic.

Calling Afghanistan a possible “crucible” for NATO, MacKay encouraged all members to take a close look at their contributions to Afghanistan thus far and seriously consider stepping up those efforts. “Countries have to look at what their capacity is and what their contributions are, and bear in mind that if they can’t send troops, if it is not boots on the ground, is it financial? Is it humanitarian aid?”





Tauscher, picking up on a theme that has been repeated throughout Brussels Forum, said there is a great need to educate the public about the need to focus on Afghanistan and make sure it never falls back into the hands of terrorist factions.

“For many of us there was a success in conflating Iraq and Afghanistan and now we have to step back and make sure what is different about Afghanistan and why it is so important, why that space needs to be occupied until [Afghan] people can do it responsibly,” Tauscher said. “We know what happened when the space wasn’t occupied, and we cannot let that happen again.”

There was also discussion about meeting the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse NATO membership. NATO is to expand from 26 to 28 members with the addition of Croatia and Albania in April, and there is a concern that continued expansion of the alliance could make the alliance a “jack-of-all-trades” and an expert in none.

“In my part of the world, we have a historic sense of guarantees that they need to be backed by capabilities and logistics.” said Sikorski, who along with McKay has been mentioned as possible successor to de Hoop Scheffer. “And if you look at events in the Caucasus, Georgia is not part of the [NATO] alliance yet, but it was assumed that she was a special partner of the U.S., and when push came to shove, we were not able to help Georgia much.”

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*Brussels Forum is an annual high-level meeting of the most influential political, corporate, and intellectual leaders worldwide to address pressing challenges facing both sides of the Atlantic. Participants include heads of state, senior officials from the European Union institutions and member states, U.S. officials, Congressional representatives, Parliamentarians, think tank leaders, academics, corporate executives, and media.*

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